

REMARKS

Claims 3-9, 12-22, 25-26, 33-34, and 37-38 remain in connection with the present application with claims 1-2, 10-11, 19-20, 23-24, 27-32, 35-37, and 39-59 being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. By the present amendment, each of claims 3, 6, 12, 15, 25, and 26 have been rewritten in independent form.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-9, 12-22, 25-26, 33-34, and 37-38 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present amendment, each of claims 3, 6, 12, 15, 25, and 26 have been rewritten in independent form. Further, each of the remaining claims depends upon one of the allowed claims. Accordingly, by the present amendment, each of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim Objection

The Examiner objected to claim 12 for a minor informality. Accordingly, claim 12 has been amended as requested by the Examiner. Further, claim 15 has also been amended in a somewhat similar manner. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 27-30, 43, 50, and 53 under 35 U.S.C. §101, alleging that the claimed subject matter is non-statutory. Further, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 10-11, 19-20, and 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Naito et al. (US Patent No. 6,704,008). Further, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 10-11, 19-20, and 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kawanabe et al. (US Patent No. 7,158,107). These prior art rejections have all been rendered moot in view of the cancellation of each of the rejected claims. Thus, although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejections, as the rejected claims have been cancelled, the prior art rejections have been rendered moot.

Comments on the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

The Examiner set forth a Statement For Reasons of Allowance, which include some typographical errors and which do not necessarily include the exact language of each of the pending claims. Applicants submit these comments to ensure that the claims are interpreted solely based upon the limitations present therein, noting that each of independent claims 3, 6, 12, 15, 25, and 26 should be interpreted separately, each being interpreted solely based upon limitations set forth therein.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above Amendments and remarks, consideration of the objections and rejections and allowance of each of pending

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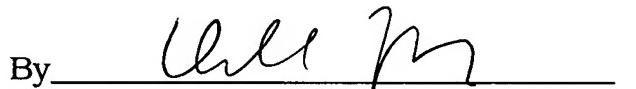
claims 3-9, 12-22, 25-26, 33-34, and 37-38 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

In the event this Response does not place the present application in condition for allowance, applicant requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (703) 668-8000 to schedule a personal interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Very truly yours,

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